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Newsline

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National Highway System Approved

Extra! Extra!



 Beginning with this issue of the Newsline there will be a special in-detail focus on various transportation programs within MDT. Another effort to keep our readers informed!

After four years of work by many, the National Highway System (NHS) legislation was enacted November 28, 1995.

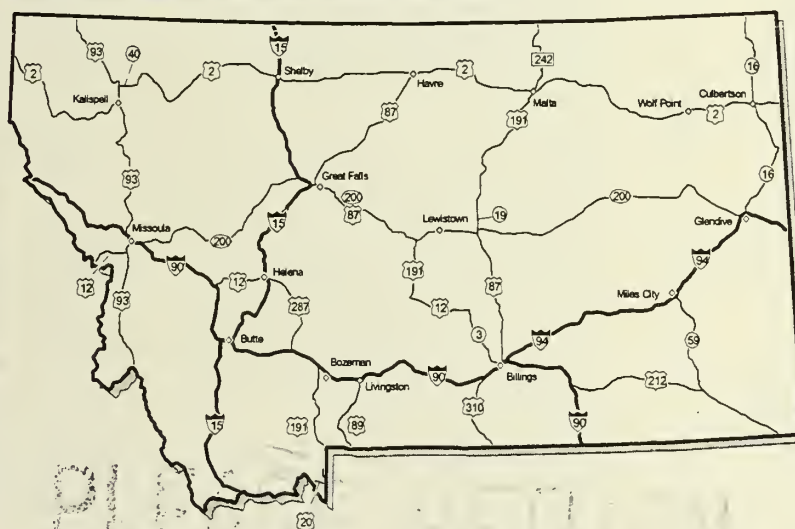
NHS Bill Summary

✍ The bill designates the National Highway System, provides important regulatory relief and includes beneficial Montana-specific provisions.

75% of outbound manufactured freight. These highways will ultimately be improved to the best standards: wider shoulders, fewer curves, enhanced safety features and passing lanes where needed.

This final system added more than 800 miles to the original USDOT proposal and will bring NHS service to all regions of the state, linking us to the nation's economic future. The national importance of the NHS should also prove to be an effective argument for the continuation of a strong federal role in our rural highways.

What the NHS Does for Montana!



This system was hard won through the efforts of Montana's Congressional Delegation, the Montana Transportation Commission, MDT Director Marvin Dye, and, most importantly,

the support of Montana's communities and transportation industry.

The System

The 160,000 mile NHS is expected to be the focus of Federal investments in surface transportation well into the next century. In Montana, the NHS consists of over 3,850 miles of our most important highways including the Interstate. It connects all our cities of 5,000 or more and serves 70% of all motor vehicle traffic, including 94% of inbound and

Regulatory Relief

For years Congress imposed requirements on the Federal Highway Program through financial sanctions and penalties. The NHS bill is the first evidence of Congressional willingness to reverse this trend.

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SPECIAL INSERT



MDT Planning Division Updates

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Following are a few examples of mandates that have been addressed in this legislation. Keep in mind that the funding saved on these requirements can now go to building a better and safer transportation system:

- The requirement that states use recycled (crumb) rubber in a large percentage of asphalt paving projects was eliminated. This would have cost millions of dollars and was also problematic because of Montana's extreme winter climate.
- The mandate requiring development of six management systems was eliminated. - Montana and other states can now tailor the systems to meet their needs.
- The 20-Year old national maximum speed limit penalty was eliminated. (See insert for further details)
- The requirement that states have mandatory motorcycle helmet laws was dropped.
- A prohibition against the Federal government requiring states to install metric signs was added to statute. Any actions to convert to metric before September 30, 2000 are optional.

*"All in all, the NHS
was worth the wait"*

"Sandy Straehl-Planning"

Montana Provisions

① The planned project to widen Missoula's Orange Street Bridge is now eligible for additional funding.

② Due to changes in eligibility language MDT can now apply for grant money to help accelerate construction projects on US 93

between Somers and Whitefish.

③ Two high priority corridors were defined in Montana: CANAMEX on I-15, and the CAMINO REAL which

connects I-90 in Billings to I-15 in Great Falls via Lavina and Harlowton. This definition may position these corridors for future planning grants or funding opportunities.

Lastly, and most importantly, passage of the NHS bill puts Montana's highway program back in business. Since Congress missed the September 30, 1995 deadline for designation; the Federal Highway Administration has been withholding 1996 National Highway and Interstate Maintenance apportionments of about \$69 million. While this caused several projects to be delayed, it's expected that FHWA will distribute the funds quickly and that the delayed projects will be let in January. ♦



Intercity Public Transportation Needs Addressed

MDT recently completed a study of intercity and rural passenger transportation needs in Montana. The study concluded the Department should focus available funding in the following four areas to support and improve this important service:

- Marketing and promotion to increase public awareness of available services
- Expanding existing non-profit transit coverage to fill service gaps.
- Reduced intercity bus fares for elderly and disadvantaged passengers.
- Capital improvements to bus, rail, and airport facilities served by intercity bus.

Please call Janis Winston at (406) 444-4210 if you have any questions about this program. ♦

Our Nation's Highways Selected Facts and Figures

This Federal Highway Administration publication is available upon request and provides a condensed overview of facts and figures about our nations highways.

If Interested
Call 1-800-714-7296

THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING NEWSLINE is published quarterly by the Montana Department of Transportation, Transportation Planning Division. The preparation of this newsletter is financed through the Federal Transit Administration's Section 26(a)(2) Grant and the Federal Highway Administration's Statewide Planning and Research Program. Articles appearing in the Transportation Planning Newsletter are contributed by the staff of the MDT Transportation Planning Division.



MDT Planning Division Updates



1996 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

In the Autumn 1995 issue of Newsline, the Project Analysis Section described the process of requesting public comment on the 1996 STIP via press releases, maps and direct mailings. The section received a wide variety of comments on highway issues ranging from accelerating projects on US 93, improved striping, delineators, and lighting on Homestake Pass, additional rest

areas, building a new interchange in Billings, revising the Rumble Strip Policy, and new paving projects just to name a few. The section also heard comments on rail, transit, bicycle and aeronautic issues.

Some comments resulted in new projects being nominated for consideration and other comments indicated MDT should accelerate

work on some existing projects. In late August the Montana Transportation Commission approved the 1996 STIP. FHWA & FTA jointly approved the 1996 STIP on November 1, 1995.

Anyone interested in a final copy of the 1996 STIP should contact the Project Analysis Section at (406) 444-7639 or 1-800-714-7296. ♦

CTEP Progress Report

Over 200 Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) projects have been selected by local communities and are under development. The following is a summary of projects that are completed or substantially completed and projects that are under construction:

Substantially Completed / Completed Projects

City Hall Sidewalks - Stanford	Sidewalks - Park City
Landscaping - White Sulphur Springs	Charlie Russell Trail Brochure
Bike / Pedestrian Path - Stevensville	Airport Landscaping - Butte
City Sidewalks - Twin Bridges	Turner Park - Turner
Sidewalk, Curbs and Gutter - Richey	City Park Walking Path - Baker
Granite Peak Park - Columbus	Sidewalks - Columbus
Mullan Road Walkway - Frenchtown	
Bike / Pedestrian Walkway - Wolf Point	
Cascade County Courthouse - Great Falls	

Projects Under Construction

CMR Museum - Great Falls	Sidewalks - Ronan & Billings
Archway and Trees - Lewistown	Fort Peck Theater - Fort Peck
Rivers Edge Trail - Great Falls	Paris Gibson Square - Great Falls
Racetrack Landscaping - Butte	
Milwaukee Rd. Right-of-Way Preservation - Missoula	

There are currently 60 projects under design

For more information on these or other CTEP projects, call Mike Davis at (406) 444-4383 or Ed Hedlund at (406) 444-0809

Transportation Planning Welcomes Our New Additions in the Last Quarter

Highway Statistics

Darren Batchelor

Traffic Data Collection

Ed Erath

Tom Winfield

Ron Wuertley

Special Studies

John Gardner

Sally Yarnall

Vicky McLane

CTEP

Gary Rafter

Myron Tucker

Project Analysis

Jeff Sillick

Transportation Planning Division Telephone Numbers

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call the toll-free 1-800-714-7296 (in Montana only), or (406)444-3423.

Administrator (Patricia Sandon).....	444-3143
CTEP (Mike Davis).....	444-4383
Mapping (Joe O'Neil).....	444-6119
Projects (Jeff Ebert).....	444-7639
Rail Planning (Jan Vogel).....	444-4262
Secondary Roads (Gary Larson).....	444-6110
Statistics (Rick Rogne).....	444-6111
Traffic Safety (Albert Goke).....	444-7301
Traffic Statistics (Dennis Hult).....	444-6122
Transit (Janis Winston).....	444-4210
Urban Planning (Ross Tervo).....	444-3445

special Program Focus

Secondary Road Program



What Are Secondary Roads?

The "Secondary Highway System" includes those highways that have been functionally classified by the department as either minor arterial or major collector and have been selected by the Montana Transportation Commission, in co-operation with the Board of County Commissioners, to be placed on the Secondary Highway System.

Who Is The Program Managed By?

Secondary Roads Engineer - Gary Larson (444-6110)

Where Does The Money Come From?

Federal Aid is divided into two categories: the National Highway System (NHS) and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). Funding for the Secondary Road Program is suballocated from STP funds. Funding is 86.58% federal with a 13.42% state match. 1995 Federal Fiscal Year funding was approximately \$15 million statewide.

How Is The Money Distributed?

According to Montana law, funds are apportioned to the 56 counties based on the following 4 factors: (Each factor is a ratio of that county to the total)

- ◆ County land area
- ◆ Rural population
- ◆ Rural road mileage
- ◆ The value of all rural lands

What Highways Are Eligibility?

Highways must be classified as "Secondary Highway" (See "What are Secondary Roads?")

What Improvements Are Eligible?

Any improvement to the roadway which improves the structure of the road is eligible for Secondary funding. Maintenance activity is not eligible. Eligible improvements include reconstruction, overlays, bridge rehabilitation or reconstruction, pipe replacement, improved railroad crossing surfaces and epoxy striping.

Who Sets The Project Priorities?

County commissioners establish priorities based on available funds. All priorities are documented via a completed SR-1 form which details route, milepost, scope of work, and county concurrence.

What Is The Review & Approval Process?

Each project is reviewed by MDT's District Engineer as well as the Secondary Roads Engineer. All projects are then included in the "Statewide Transportation Improvement Program" and subjected to public review. As custodian of Montana transportation system, the Montana Transportation Commission must ultimately approve all proposed improvements to the Secondary Highway System. Final approval occurs in July or August of each year.

What Is The Programming Process?

Following an internal review MDT's Fiscal Programming Section submits a program request it to the Federal Highway Administration. FHWA reviews and then commits federal participation.

Who Does Project Design, Development and Construction?

MDT allows each county the option of a consultant design or MDT design. MDT encourages counties to retain consultants for such projects. After the decision is made preliminary engineering activities begin and ultimately the project is constructed.

*Secondary
518 between
Montana City
and
East Helena*



MONTANA'S SPEED LIMIT LAWS

Effective December 8, 1995

	Daytime Speed Limit	Nighttime Speed Limit	Change Due to NHS Act
TRUCKS OVER 8000 lbs.			
Interstate	65 MPH	65 MPH	NO CHANGE
All other Roads	60 MPH	55 MPH	
ALL OTHER VEHICLES (See Exceptions)			
Interstate	BASIC RULE*	65 MPH	DAYTIME ONLY
All other roads	BASIC RULE*	55 MPH	
EXCEPTIONS: (All Roads Included)			
Triple Truck Comb.	55 MPH	55 MPH	NO CHANGE
House Trailers	50 MPH	50 MPH	NO CHANGE
Construction Zones (All Vehicles Apply)	35 MPH or AS POSTED	35 MPH or AS POSTED	NO CHANGE
SPECIAL SPEED ZONES and URBAN AREA LIMITS	AS POSTED	AS POSTED	NO CHANGE

* Speed enforcement for passenger vehicles and trucks under 8000 lbs. are governed by MCA 61-8-303(1) or the "Basic Rule". This law states that vehicles shall be driven in a reasonable and prudent manner depending on the conditions at the time and place of operation. Conditions considered in enforcement include: traffic pattern, vehicle condition, and roadway and weather conditions.



Montana Department of Transportation

December 12, 1995



special Program Focus

• Save Our Secondaries Program

What Is Save Our Secondaries?

“Save Our Secondaries” is a program that preserves Montana’s Secondary Highway System by extending the life of existing paved routes with thin lift overlays and/or seal and covers.

Who Is The Program Managed By?

Secondary Roads Engineer - Gary Larson(444-6110)

Where Does The Money Come From?

The program is 100% funded by the State Highway Trust Fund (State Gas Tax) in the amount of \$15 million per year.

How Is the Money Distributed?

Funding is disbursed to Montana’s five financial districts. The level of funding available to each district is dependent on the previous years over or under expenditure of funds. Funds are then distributed to counties based on needs and district priorities.

What Are Eligibility Requirements?

SOS funds are used to extend the life of existing paved routes which were on the Secondary Highway System as of January 1, 1991. Funds are eligible for pavement preservation which includes thin lift overlays and/or seal and covers. Any preparatory work on the roadway and/or shoulder; such as leveling, crack sealing,

shoulder widening, digouts, or safety enhancements, are the responsibility of the county and must be completed prior to construction of an SOS project. In 1998 MDT will allocate approximately \$1 million in SOS funding to the Off-System Bridge Program.

How Are The Priorities Set?

Priorities identified by county commissioners in the 1994 Needs Study are used to develop the SOS project list. Project lists in each MDT District are further prioritized by District personnel and the Secondary Roads Engineer. District priorities consider needs of all counties in that district, funding levels, and the fair division of projects among all counties based on funding levels.

What Is The Approval Process?

Any improvements utilizing SOS funds must be approved by the Montana Transportation Commission. As part of that approval process, all SOS projects are included in the “Statewide Transportation Improvement Program” (STIP) and subjected to public review. Final Commission approval of SOS projects occurs in March or April after the previous year’s projects have been let to contract.

What Is The Programming Process?

After Transportation Commission approval, MDT staff develops programming documents. These documents initiate surveying and design activities.

Who Does Project Design, Development and Construction?

All SOS projects are designed by MDT. Because these projects are simple overlays and seals and covers, designs are relatively straight forward and quick compared to most construction projects.



special Program Focus

Off-System Bridge Program



What Is The Off-System Bridge Program?

The "Highway Bridge Replacement or Rehabilitation Program" (HBRRP) enables states to replace or rehabilitate bridges that are significantly important and unsafe because of structural deficiencies, physical deterioration, or functional obsolescence.

Who Is The Program Managed By?

MDT's Secondary Roads Engineer and Bridge Bureau.



Madison River South of Ennis

Where Does The Money Come From?

Funding is 80% federal with a 20% state match. 65% of the total authorization is dedicated to "On-System Bridges". A minimum of 15% must be dedicated to "Off-System Bridges" with 20% optional. Montana has opted for the full 35% for "Off-System Bridges".

How Is the Money Distributed?

The program allocates funds to Montana's five financial districts based on need. The funds are then distributed to counties based on a priority system.

What Are Eligibility Requirements?

Off-System bridge funding is dedicated to bridges not on Interstate, NHS, Primary, Secondary, or Urban routes.

How Are The Priorities Set?

A field inventory of the condition of the state's bridges is carried out on a two-year cycle. A structure inventory and appraisal is completed and used to calculate a sufficiency rating for each bridge. Counties prioritize projects based on the sufficiency ratings then the Secondary Roads Engineer and the Bridge Bureau prioritize based on structural condition and funding.

What Is The Approval Process?

Bridges projects must appear in the STIP which is subjected to public review before receiving Montana Transportation Commission approval.

What Is The Programming Process?

Following an internal review, MDT's Fiscal Programming Section submits a program request to the Federal Highway Administration. FHWA ultimately must approve federal participation.

Who Does Project Design, Development and Construction?

The majority of all bridge projects are designed by MDT's Bridge Bureau. Depending on MDT work load and availability of staff, some projects go to consultants.

Forest Highway Program

special Program Focus

What Is A Forest Highway?

A Forest Highway is a road that is either within or adjacent to a national forest, and that serves the national forest. It must also be under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority, and must be open to public travel.

What Is The Forest Highway Program?

The "Forest Highway Program" (PFH) which resides within the Federal Lands Highway (FLHP) authorizes funds to roads classified as Forest Highways.

Who Is The Program Managed By?

County and State Representatives, the Administrator of MDT's Transportation Planning Division, the Secondary Roads and Project Analysis Engineers, and FHWA.

Where Does The Money Come From?

This program is 100% Federally funded. Of the available funding for Public Lands Highways, two-thirds is dedicated to the Forest Highway Program with the remaining one-third of the PLH funds falling under Discretionary Funds.

How Are Forest Highways Designated?

Designation to the system is proposed by the State and Forest Service (counties propose routes through the State). Final designation of a Forest Highway Route is performed by the FHWA in consultation with the Forest Service and the State. The last inventory and

redesignation which designated routes eligible for Forest Highway funding was in March of 1995.

Who Is The Program Administered By?

The Western Federal Land Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration administers the program. The nomination and selection of projects is the responsibility of: WFLHD-FHWA, United States Forest Service (USFS), and Montana Department of Transportation.

What Are Eligibility Requirements?

Any route which has satisfied the criteria for forest highway designation and is on the Forest Highway System is eligible for improvement within the limits of annual program funding.



Thompson River Forest Highway 56

How Are The Priorities Set?

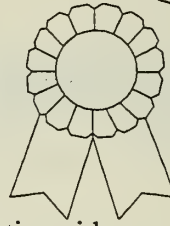
Agency representatives meet every March to discuss, plan and update the long-range program. As funding becomes available, project development is initiated. Project planning and development is projected in approximately five-year increments. All Forest Highway projects on state routes must have Transportation Commission approval.

What Is The Programming and Design Process?

All funding, program documentation, and design functions are performed by the Western Federal Land Highway Division of FHWA.

Congratulations Great Falls!

The City of Great Falls has been selected as the recipient of the 1996 National Planning Award for Planning Implementation in a Small Jurisdiction by the American Planning Association for the River's Edge Trail Project. This is a prestigious award as there are only eight winners from a field of 178 nominees nationwide.



The River's Edge Trail Project has successfully converted several miles of deteriorated riverfront into a significant community transportation and recreation asset in only six years.

Many factors have contributed to the success of this project including:

- Avid, "We won't take 'no' for an answer." public support.
- Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funding.
- Government and corporate cooperation and active participation.

Recognizing how difficult it is to bring together so many people to accomplish such a big task we'd like to congratulate everyone involved for a job well done!



River's Edge Trail
Great Falls

Montana Department of Transportation Transportation Planning Division

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